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The account farther says,—“ This endured for nearly three and half centuries from about the middle of the fourteenth century.”

Jan. 9th, 1821.

HANESAL.

The readers of the CAMBRO-BRITON will feel indebted to the writer, who has communicated the following Legend, which, however curious in itself, acquires an additional interest from its resemblance in one particular with a similar tradition current in Scotland, wherein certain beasts, brought from a lake, as in this tale, play much the same part as is here described. The Meddygon Myddvai, or Physicians of Myddvai, whose history is connected with this Legend, lived in the commencement of the thirteenth century, and their descendants are said to have practised at Myddvai within the last century. A MS. treatise of their “ Practice,” written about the year 1300, is preserved in the Welsh School; and the Red Book of Hergest contains a copy under the title of *Llyvyr y Meddyginiaethau*. There is, likewise, a fragment of the work in the Hengwrt Library, as well as other imperfect copies in different parts of Wales. Mr. Lewis Morris relates, that the last of this medical family, who lived in his time, was above his profession, and gave up the practice. This was about sixty years ago.

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#### THE LEGEND OF MEDDYGON MYDDVAI.

“ Meddyg nis gwnai modd y gwnaeth  
Myddfai, o chái ddyn meddfaith.”—*Dafydd ab Gwilym*.

#### To the EDITOR of the CAMBRO-BRITON.

SIR,—A man, who lived in the farm house, called Esgair-llaethdy, in the Parish of Myddavi, in Carmarthenshire, having bought some lambs in a neighbouring fair, led them to graze near *Llyn y Van Vach* on the Black Mountains. Whenever he visited the lambs, three most beautiful female figures presented themselves to him from the lake and often made excursions on the boundaries of it. For some time he pursued and endeavoured to catch them, but always failed; for the enchanting nymphs ran before him, and, when they had reached the lake, they tauntingly exclaimed,—

Cras dy fara

Anhawdd ein dala,

which, with a little circumlocution, means, “for thee, who eatest baked bread, it is difficult to catch us.”

One day some moist bread from the Lake came to shore. The farmer devoured it with great avidity, and on the following day he was successful in his pursuit, and caught the fair damsels. After a little conversation with them, he commanded courage sufficient to make proposals of marriage to one of them. She consented to accept them, on the condition that he would distinguish her from her two sisters on the following day. This was a new and a very great difficulty to the young farmer; for the fair nymphs were so similar in form and features, that he could scarcely perceive any difference between them. He observed, however, a trifling singularity in the strapping of her sandal, by which he recognized her the following day. Some, indeed, who relate this legend, say, that this lady of the lake hinted in a private conversation with her swain, that upon the day of trial she would place herself between her two sisters, and that she would turn her right foot a little to the right, and that by this means he distinguished her from her sisters. Whatever were the means, the end was secured: he selected her, and she immediately left the lake and accompanied him to his farm. Before she quitted, she summoned to attend her from the lake seven cows, two oxen, and one bull.

This lady engaged to live with him until such time as he would strike her three times without cause. For some years they lived together in comfort, and she bore him three sons, who were the celebrated Meddygon Myddvai.

One day, when preparing for a fair in the neighbourhood, he desired her to go to the field for his horse, she said she would: but, being rather dilatory, he said to her humourously “dôs, dôs, dôs,” i. e. “go, go, go,” and he slightly touched her arm *three times* with his glove.

As she now deemed the terms of her marriage broken, she immediately departed, and summoned with her her seven cows, her two oxen, and the bull. The oxen were at that very time ploughing in the field, but they immediately obeyed her call, and took the plough with them. The furrow from the field, in which they were ploughing, to the margin of the lake, is to be seen in several parts of that country to the present day.

After her departure, she once met her two sons in a *Cwm*\*, now called *Cwm Meddygon*, and delivered to each of them a bag

\* A dale or valley: hence the English word *Combe*, as in *Wycombe*, *Ilfracombe*, &c.—ED.

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containing some articles, which are unknown, but which are supposed to have been some discoveries in medicine.

The Meddygon Myddvai were Rhiwallon and his sons, Cadwgan, Gruffydd, and Einion. They were the chief physicians of their age, and they wrote about A. D. 1230. A copy of their works is in the Welsh School Library, in Gray's Inn Lane.

*Trehomer.*

SIENCYN AB TYDVIL.

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## CRITICISM.

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HORÆ BRITANNICÆ; or STUDIES in ANCIENT BRITISH HISTORY, containing various Disquisitions on the national and religious Antiquities of GREAT BRITAIN, in two Volumes. By JOHN HUGHES. LONDON. 1819.

THE first volume of Horæ Britannicæ has already been noticed at some length\* ; and it now remains to redeem the pledge, offered on the former occasion, with respect to the remainder of this national publication. The second volume, as before intimated, is devoted to an investigation of the "Antiquities of the British Churches," a subject, which necessarily opens a wide field for the speculations of the historian and the divine ; and, connected, as it so closely is, with the sacred cause of our holy religion, it presents to the Christian mind that most gratifying and sublime of all scenes, the gradual but resistless march of the Sun of Truth over the dark and trackless wilds of error and superstition. In tracing the progressive diffusion over the isle of Britain of this celestial light, from its first faint dawn to the meridian blaze, in which it finally settled, Mr. Hughes has evinced considerable ability, as well in the testimony he has embodied, as in the reasoning he has employed towards adapting it to the main object of his inquiry. In a word, the present volume has every appearance of having occupied a greater proportion of the author's care and of having been written more *con amore*, if the expression may here be used, than the former, however valuable that may be considered for its popular illustration of many obscure passages of our ancient history, which had not before been brought under the same view. But, even on the score of novelty, the volume, now under consideration, possesses higher claims than the one preceeding it, since, to adopt the writer's own words in his Preface,

\* No. 15. p. 122.